Forest cover

† 3733. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 22 percent of total geographical land in the country is in the form of forests;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the average annual production from these forests is upto two billion dollars, which is 2 percent of the total domestic production.

(d) if so, the details in this regard; and

(e) the percentage of people in the country who are earning their livelihood gh the production in the above said forests?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) The forest cover of country as per the latest assessment report, State of Forest Report *),* 2003, is 6,78,333 sq. km. constituting 20.64% of the geographical of the country. The total forest and tree cover is 7,78,229 sq. km. stituting 23.68% of the geographical area of the country.

(c) and (d) In 2002-2003, forest contributed Rs. 27,013 crores to India's cross Domestic Products (GDP) at the current prices, which was 1.2% of the GDP. This, however, does not include the indirect benefits accruing out of the forests. Taking into account the intangible benefits also, the overall Gross Domestic Product share from forestry sector is approximately 2.9%. This includes the contribution of forestry sector to GDP with reference to tangible products which is approximately 1.5%, and of intangible outputs which is approximately 1.4%. The intangible output include the ecological services rendered by the forestry eco-system, carbon sequestration and other ecological services.

(e) As per the estimates published by Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the number of people dependent on forests in the country is

+Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

27.50 crores, whereas the number of persons actually living in forests is 10.00 crores. The forest fringe villages comprise 28% of the total number of villages in the country.

Forests are closely connected with the livelihoods of people living in the forest fringes, as they depend on forest produce for self-consumption and cash incomes. Forests also support grazing of nearly 60% of the livestock in the country and are used for collection of headloads of firewood for the sale in the market.

Wildlife protection in the eastern ghats

3734. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have distanced itself from wildli protection in the Eastern Ghats;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government are not interes* preserving wildlife in the Eastern Ghats;

(c) if so, what are the reasons for this change of attitude of Government in the last two years towards wildlife in the Eastern Ghats;

(d) the names of wildlife sanctuaries in the Eastern Ghats; and

(e) the steps proposed to send officers to visit such sanctuaries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) No Sir. All efforts are being made by the Central and State Governments for conserving and protecting the wildlife in the Eastern Ghats.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The names of wildlife sanctuaries notified by the respective State Governments in the Eastern Ghats, are placed at Statement (See below).

(e) All these sanctuaries are regularly visited by forest officers for execution, monitoring and/or supervision of the various management prescriptions for conservation and maintaining a viable population of wildlife.